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25X1 CONFIDENTIAL -2 25X1 2 25X1 The famine was very bad but I do not recall that there were any deaths directly attributable to starvation. The mild climate of most of Georgia, yielding plenty of gross and fruit through most of the year, saved the situation. Undoubtedly millions would have died if Georgia were less favored climatically. The death rate rose among children and old people whose susceptibilities to disease were increased by malnutrition. There was a great deal of stomach trouble in all age groups and the incidence of TB was very high among children. Livestock perished by the thousands but the people did not touch the cadavers. Religious sanctions among both Moslem and Christian Georgians precluded eating of the cadavers, despite the constant and widespread hunger. Ration cards were issued to the people and the only food distributed was one half pound of black bread per person per day. The blackbread was later replaced by white cornbread, doughy stuff that was difficult both to swallow and to digest. Everyone supplemented the bread with grass and fruit. I was one of the hungry children who rushed out to the fields every day after school to feed on grass. Fortunately, four or five different varieties were available ad several of them were real anably tasty. I might mention the psychological atmosphere which prevailed during the famine. The hunger and depression of the people, and their lowered vitality, created a kind of anarchy. Food was the only interest and the normal mode of living, the normal concern with possessions and work and so forth, ceased to exist. The people did not prey on one another but something very close to a jungle situation developed. 25X1 3. 25X1 The top authorities (Party and Government authorities were the same individuals) , the mayor of were all Georgians. In 1941, 25X1 the city was Georgian, four of the six city supervisors were Georgians, and the other two supervisors were Armenians. To my knowledge, these top positions in Tbilisi had never been held by Russians. Tbilisi had a population of about 800 thousand in 1941. At that time the NKVD was composed of about 95% Russian troops but all the command positions were held by Georgians, Armenians, or Azerbaijani. There were many Russians in Thilisi and some of them held good jobs in education, journalism, and other official or semi-official fields. But no Russians, openly at least and probably actually, held high political poets. In this connection, I might mention that in 1941 Georgian was still

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the language of the street in Toilisi although many Georgians could speak Russian. In contrast, Russian was widely spoken in Erevan, Armenian BER, in 1941.

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